

Student Guidelines for Academic Community Service Learning (CSL)

OVERALL GUIDELINES

Behave professionally

- In collaboration with the course director and site supervisor, prepare a Learning Plan to identify the focus of academic CSL Experience, and outline the student's specific commitments.
- Adhere to the agreed upon deliverables, schedules, and work hours, and fulfill their commitment to the partner organization in accordance with the course requirements.
- Actively participate in the activities at the learning site.
- Take initiative, and strive to be able to work both independently and as a part of a team.

Act Ethically

- Accept supervision graciously, and strive to maintain a positive relationship with your supervisor.
- Act with honesty, integrity, and fairness.
- Respect the dignity and inherent values of each person with whom you work.
- Maintain a positive and constructive attitude while at the learning site.

Reflect

- Respond to feedback and constructive criticism graciously.
- Continually reflect on work and experiences at the learning site, and actively participate in all reflection exercises, whether in-course or at the learning site. This is especially true when encountering something that challenges the personal value system of the student.
- Strive to not just work *for*, but work *with* the partner organization. Listen, consult regularly, and ensure that both you and the partner organization feel a sense of empowerment through the relationship.

Communicate

- Respond to all correspondence in a timely manner, including correspondence from the experiential education coordinator, the site supervisor, and the course director.
- Approach the course director or experiential education coordinator when assistance is needed.
- Meet with the course director to discuss progress and concerns, and to obtain guidance and resources that best support learning.
- Write and submit assignments as per course requirements.

Stay Safe

- Ensure you are properly orientated to the learning site, including any safety procedures or hazards.
- Sign and complete all forms in this manual, and regularly fill in your hours log.
- Review and exercise your rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

By E-mail

1. Use your yorku.ca email address. If you need to use an alternate email, make sure that the address is neutral and professional, and should never be suggestive, comical, or provocative.
2. Pay attention to make sure your name is displayed in the “from” field, and not an old nickname you may have forgotten about.
3. Always fill in the Subject field with content that is descriptive, clear and concise. An example would be to write, “Re: York Experiential Education Course at Westview Secondary School”
4. Format the email in the same way that you would format a letter. Always use proper grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Do not use emoticons, abbreviations, or other symbols.
5. Begin your e-mails with a proper greeting, such as “Hello Mr./Ms./Dr. X”. Do not use terms such as Sir, Madam, Miss or Mrs. Sign your e-mails with your full first and last name.
6. When replying to a message, refer to past correspondence so that the recipient is clearly reminded of the issues and topic of your message.
7. Preferably, each email should have only one subject, consistent with the subject line. If there are two or more issues/questions in an e- mail, be sure to clearly indicate what and how many issues/questions briefly at the beginning of the message.
8. Be patient for a response. Your community partners are very busy. If you do not receive a response after 3 business days, call your community contact directly and leave a voice-message. If you do not hear back again after 2 days, notify your course director.

By Phone

1. Start with a proper greeting, such as “Hello Mr./Ms.”. Do NOT use terms such as Sir, Madam, Miss or Mrs.
2. Clearly introduce yourself, speaking slowly and enunciating your words.
3. Provide a short introduction of who you are and the course that you are in, and the purpose of your call.
4. Request any information that they can provide for you to learn more about the organization and their work.
5. If you are requesting a meeting or orientation, have your agenda or schedule ready before you call.
6. Be prepared to provide contact information such as an e-mail address or phone number. Use your yorku.ca address or another neutral and appropriate e-mail address, see e-mail guidelines above.
7. If you are leaving a voice message, speak clearly and slowly. Provide a contact number or email twice – at the beginning and end of the message. Briefly note the time you are calling and the subject of the voicemail. Most voicemails should not last more than one minute.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

During any work placement, your health and safety must be the very first priority. The Occupational Health and Safety Act was enacted to provide minimum standards for health and safety in the workplace. The Act clearly specifies the rights and duties of employers, supervisors and workers (including learners). Employers and students have certain duties under the law, such as to “take every precaution reasonable in circumstances for the protection of a worker”. Workers (or students) have a duty to report “the existence of any hazard of which he or she knows”. Site Supervisors also have duties, which can be found in the Act.

Under the Act, workers (or students) have:

- the right to know;
- the right to participate; and
- the right to refuse unsafe work.

During your placement, it is your responsibility to understand and exercise these rights.

Site Supervisors for service-learning placements must:

- instruct, inform and supervise students regarding health and safety;
- ensure that any recommended protective equipment, devices and clothing are used or worn by the student;
- advise students of any hazardous materials in the workplace, and ensure that students are aware of applicable work safety guidelines;
- provide training to prevent back injury, especially when lifting is necessary;
- advise students of any risk of contracting infectious diseases (such as Hepatitis B).

Students have an obligation to follow the Health and Safety regulations specific to the placement, including appropriate immunizations. Students have the right to refuse work if they have reason to believe that the workplace is unsafe.

OTHER GUIDELINES

Attendance

The student shall inform the learning site's supervisor of absenteeism and/or lateness, at least one hour before the work is due to start.

- If you are working for at least four hours, students are encouraged to take at least a 30-minute lunch break. This time counts toward your total work time.
- Travel time to and from sites is variable and the student must take this into account when travelling to the site. Travel time does not count towards placement hours.
- If you are ill, you may be asked to submit a valid health practitioner's note for missed hours.
- Missed hours must be made up by the student, at the convenience of the learning site.

Professional Appearance and Dress Code

You are expected to determine and follow the specific dress policies of the learning site. Where there are no policies, you must discuss appropriate dress codes with their supervisor, and dress professionally. This generally entails dressing modestly, not inappropriately displaying parts of your body, and avoiding wearing logos or symbols that may be offensive. You may not be allowed to work if you are not properly dressed, and you would have to make up those missed hours later.

Documentation

Ensure you complete all forms, including: WEPA, Student Agreement, Learning Plan, Orientation Checklist, your Hours Log, and any other relevant forms.

Research

If at any point during the placement the partner organization requests that you conduct primary research, it is your responsibility to submit a department-level ethics review before engaging in research, irrespective of any ethical reviews the partner organization has done. Ensure that data ownership is spelled out in writing. If there is going to be a research collaboration between the partner and you or any other member of the York community, that a Research Collaboration Agreement is prepared prior to beginning the research.

Expenses

Students are responsible for all expenses related to the academic CSL Experience, e.g. uniforms, travel costs, meals, and accommodation. Students are not permitted to accept financial remuneration from the learning site or clients. The learning site is not responsible for any expenses.

Transportation

All students are responsible for their transportation to and from the learning site and to all meetings pertaining to the academic CSL Experience. **Under no circumstances should students transport learning site clients in their vehicles, or *be* transported by their supervisor.** York University will not provide insurance coverage for this purpose. Should a student be asked to transport a client or clients, he or she must notify the course director or the experiential education coordinator immediately. In some cases, where there is an agency policy on transportation, the agency may permit the learning site supervisor to transport a student. York University does not accept liability for the learning site supervisor transporting clients. Any student not following the above guidelines is at risk for involuntary withdrawal from the course, and potentially course failure.